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Mahathir-Youth

THE NATION IS INDEBTED TO UMNO YOUTH, SAYS MAHATHIR

JOHOR BAHRU, Aug 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has commended Umno Youth for its never-waning spirit since its inception more than half-a-century ago saying that the nation is indebted to the movement.

"Although it is more than 50 years old, Umno Youth keeps maintaining a youthful spirit," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president.

His launching of the Umno Youth motorcycle-borne general election task corps exemplified such spirit, the prime minister said addressing a 10,000-strong crowd at the function in Senai near here today.

The launching was upon Dr Mahathir's arrival for a two-day working visit to Johor.

"I hope we are ever-inflamed by this spirit given that our cause does not end with just winning the general election. There's much more to be done when Umno Youth attains adulthood to take over from us of the current bunch," he said to the thunderous ovation of the crowd.

Dr Mahathir said Umno Youth had served as the party's protagonists since the pre-independence days till today, spearheading the cause of the party and the movement.

"We're preparing for a general election. This we hold every five years and the Umno and the Umno Youth spirit and zeal contributed much to our victories in the past nine general elections," he said.

Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that the next time around the governing Barisan Nasional (BN) would score a landslide victory as was previously because of the never-waning fighting spirit of the Umno Youth.

"We have no idea yet when the general election will be held. We'll eventually hold it but I'm convinced that Umno Youth especially the Johor Umno Youth will not lose steam and zeal because of the long wait," he said.

"Even if we were to call for the general election tomorrow, I'm confident of securing the same results," he said and the crowd responded cheekily asking the prime minister to announce the election date.

Dr Mahathir said that despite him being given assurance that the BN would again make a clean sweep of all the seats to be contested in Johor, he was still losing sleep over party problems.

In the 1995 general election, the BN won all the 20 parliamentary and 40 state seats at stake in Johor.

Dr Mahathir urged Umno Youth movements in the rest of the country to be equally prepared as the Johor Umno Youth to further the party's cause to guide Malaysia to join the league of developed nations.

Although Malaysia had advanced considerably since independence, there was much more to be accomplished and the government would like to see all nation-building efforts bring about the desired results, he said.

"We had recently overcome the economic crisis without relying on others. Today the world acknowledges our capabilities in overcoming these problems," he said.

However, he said, the years ahead would see many more of the obstacles and attempts to derail the country, including that by world major powers.

But notwithstanding all these, he was confident that the nation would prevail, said Dr Mahathir.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Umno Youth acting chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein.

-- BERNAMA  
MKO rgn